AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

In the Application, please amend paragraphs 0043-0047 of the specification as hereinafter indicated.

[0043] Figures 1A through 6B illustrate a first embodiment 20A of the vehicle 20 according to the present invention. The vehicle 20A is a zero turn (ZT) vehicle that includes, as particularly illustrated in Figure 3, a frame 22 having an associated front end 80, a rear end 82, and a fore-aft axis 84 extending therebetween. The frame 22 itself includes a plurality of support members 24, 26L, 26R, 28, 30L, 30R, 32L, 32R, 34L, 34R, 36, and 38 and also a plurality of support panels 40L, 40R, and 42 assembled together as particularly illustrated in Figures 2A, 2B, 3, 5, 6A, and 6B. It is to be understood, however, that such support members and support panels may alternatively be formed as an integral whole. In addition to the frame 22, the vehicle 20A also includes a body 60 that is mounted to the frame 22. The body 60 itself optionally includes a roof panel 58, left and right front roof panel support members (only the left front roof panel support member 57L ~~and 57R~~ is shown), left and right rear roof panel support members 59L and 59R, a front hood panel 62, left and right side panels (only the left side panel 64L ~~and 64R~~ is shown), a rear panel 76, left and right front fenders 44L and 44R, and left and right rear fenders 66L and 66R assembled together as particularly illustrated in Figures 1A and 1B. Given such an assemblage of parts, a front window 70, left and right side windows (only the left side window 74L ~~and 74R~~ is shown), a rear window 72, left and right head lights (not shown), and left and right tail lights 68L and 68R are successfully accommodated and incorporated within the vehicle 20A as well. Notwithstanding such a first embodiment 20A wherein the frame 22 and the body 60 are constructed separately before being mounted together, it is to be understood that the body 60 and the frame 22 may alternatively be constructed such that they are substantially integral with each other within a substantially "unitized" or "unibody" construction.

[0044] In addition to both the frame 22 and the body 60, the vehicle 20A also includes a first embodiment 131A of the actively adjustable axle system 131 with a pair of rear drive wheels 56L and 56R. The actively adjustable axle system 131A itself includes a first embodiment 86A of the adjustable axle assembly 86, a first embodiment 90A of the actuation system 90, and the electronic controller 96. The adjustable axle assembly 86A, as particularly illustrated in Figure 3, is mounted to the rear portion of the frame

22 such that an adjustable axle assembly axis 88 associated with the adjustable axle assembly 86A is aligned substantially orthogonal to the fore-aft axis 84 associated with the frame 22. The adjustable axle assembly 86A itself includes a first embodiment 116A of a cross arm assembly 116 and also a pair of swing arms 110L and 110R. The cross arm assembly 116A, first of all, includes a single cross arm 138. As particularly illustrated in Figures 6A and 6B, the swing arms 110L and 110R, in turn, respectively have pivotal ends (only the right pivotal end ~~112L and~~ 112R is identified) pivotally mounted at pivot points 132L and 132R to the frame 22 of the vehicle 20A. In addition, the swing arms 110L and 110R also have distal ends 114L and 114R interconnected with the cross arm 138 at attachment points 134L and 134R.

[0045] Given the adjustable axle assembly 86A as configured, the two rear drive wheels 56L and 56R are rotatably suspended from the two swing arms 110L and 110R proximate the distal ends 114L and 114R thereof. As particularly illustrated in Figures 1A, 1B, 2A, 2B, 6A, and 6B, suspension of the pair of rear drive wheels 56L and 56R from the pair of swing arms 110L and 110R is particularly achieved with both a pair of suspension arms 130L and 130R and also a pair of strut assemblies (only the right strut assembly ~~168L and~~ 168R is identified). The suspension arms 130L and 130R themselves have, first of all, first ends pivotally fastened at pivot points 128L and 128R to the swing arms 110L and 110R proximate the distal ends 114L and 114R thereof. In addition, the suspension arms 130L and 130R also have second ends indirectly connected to the swings arms 110L and 110R proximate the pivotal ends ~~112L and 112R~~ thereof via the strut assemblies ~~168L and 168R~~. The two strut assemblies ~~168L and 168R~~ themselves, in turn, respectively include ~~both~~ coil springs (only the right coil spring ~~164L and~~ 164R is identified) and also shock absorbers [[(]]or dampers[[)]] (only the right shock absorber ~~166L and~~ 166R is identified). Given such a suspension configuration, the two rear drive wheels 56L and 56R themselves are particularly rotatably mounted to the middle sections of the two suspension arms 130L and 130R by means of a pair of hub-and-bearing assemblies (only the left assembly 170L ~~and 170R~~ is identified) as particularly illustrated in Figures 1A through 3 and 5 through 6B. In this way, the two rear drive wheels 56L and 56R are thereby ultimately rotatably mounted on the ends of the adjustable axle assembly 86A such that the two rear drive wheels 56L and 56R are aligned substantially in parallel and are in mechanical, hydraulic, and/or electrical communication with a power source (not shown) mounted to the frame 22. The power source itself may include, for example, at least one engine or motor. As a result of being in such communication with the power

source, the two rear drive wheels 56L and 56R of the vehicle 20A are thereby capable of facilitating both moving and independent driving interaction with the ground 103.

[0046] To facilitate adjustment of the adjustable axle assembly 86A, the actuation system 90A includes a pair of telescoping cylinders 126L and 126R serving as left and right actuators. As particularly illustrated in Figures 6A and 6B, the two telescoping cylinders 126L and 126R are preferably connected between the frame 22 of the vehicle 20A and projections 111L and 111R integral with the pivotal ends ~~112L and 112R~~ of the two swing arms 110L and 110R. In addition, as particularly illustrated in Figure 4, the two telescoping cylinders 126L and 126R (i.e., actuators) are also electrically connected to the electronic controller 96 which itself is mounted to and/or within the body 60. In such a configuration, the electronic controller 96 is particularly capable of communicating electrical control signals to the two telescoping cylinders 126L and 126R to thereby adjust the fore-aft position of the pair of rear drive wheels 56L and 56R as necessary to actively maintain the fore-aft stability of the vehicle 20A.

[0047] In addition to the frame 22, the body 60, the actively adjustable axle system 131A, and the two rear drive wheels 56L and 56R, the vehicle 20A further includes a pair of dolly wheel assemblies 46L and 46R. The dolly wheel assemblies 46L and 46R are mounted to the front portion of the frame 22 such that they cooperate with the two rear drive wheels 56L and 56R in generally maintaining the overall balance of the vehicle 20A as the vehicle 20A travels over the ground 103. As particularly illustrated in Figures 2A, 2B, 3, 6A, and 6B, the pair of dolly wheel assemblies 46L and 46R itself includes a pair of ground-interacting dolly wheels 48L and 48R, a matching pair of spindles (only the left spindle 54L ~~and 54R~~ is shown), a matching pair of swivel arms (only the left arm 52L ~~and 52R~~ is shown), and a matching pair of swivel joints (only the left joint 50L ~~and 50R~~ is shown). The two dolly wheels 48L and 48R are rotatably mounted on the two spindles ~~54L and 54R~~. The two spindles ~~54L and 54R~~, in turn, are connected to the two swivel arms ~~52L and 52R~~. The two swivel arms ~~52L and 52R~~ are swivel mounted to the frame 22 by the two swivel joints ~~50L and 50R~~ respectively situated underneath the two front fenders 44L and 44R. Given such a configuration, the two dolly wheel assemblies 46L and 46R thereby serve as two supplemental ground-interacting apparatuses which cooperate with the two rear drive wheels 56L and 56R to thereby maintain clearance between both the frame 22 and the body 60 and the ground 103. The two ground-interacting dolly wheels 48L and 48R are, by design in this particular

embodiment, not capable of being directly steered by a vehicle operator onboard the vehicle 20A. It is to be understood, however, that the two dolly wheels 48L and 48R may optionally be equipped to power rotate in sync or in coordination with the moving speed of the two rear drive wheels 56L and 56R.

Please also amend paragraph 0059 of the specification as hereinafter indicated.

[0059] Another alternative embodiment 131C of the actively adjustable axle system 131 is illustrated in Figures 8A and 8B. As illustrated, the actively adjustable axle system 131C includes a second embodiment 86B of the adjustable axle assembly 86, the first embodiment 90A of the actuation system 90, and the electronic controller 96. The adjustable axle assembly 86B itself includes a pair of slide arms (only the right slide arm ~~118L and~~ 118R is shown) as well as a second embodiment 116B of the cross arm assembly 116. The two slide arms ~~118L and 118R~~, first of all, are slidingly and respectively engaged within two slots (only the right slot ~~25L and~~ 25R is shown) defined within the frame 22 of the vehicle 20A. The cross arm assembly 116B, in turn, includes ~~both~~ a first cross arm (not shown) that interconnects the two slide arms ~~118L and 118R~~ at their respective first attachment points (only the first attachment point ~~136L and~~ 136R of the right slide arm 118R is shown) and also a second cross arm (not shown) that similarly interconnects the two slide arms ~~118L and 118R~~ at their respective second attachment points (only the second attachment point ~~137L and~~ 137R of the right slide arm 118R is shown). Given such an adjustable axle assembly 86B, the rear drive wheels 56L and 56R in this alternative embodiment 131C are instead rotatably suspended from [[the]] these slide arms ~~118L and 118R~~. The two telescoping cylinders 126L and 126R of the actuation system 90A, in cooperation therewith, are connected between the frame 22 of the vehicle 20A and [[the]] these two slide arms ~~118L and 118R~~. In such a configuration, when the two telescoping cylinders 126L and 126R are fully contracted, [[the]] these two slide arms ~~118L and 118R~~ of the adjustable axle assembly 86B along with the two rear drive wheels 56L and 56R are thereby moved (i.e., slid) into a fully retracted (forward) fore-aft position as illustrated in Figure 8A. On the other hand, when the two telescoping cylinders 126L and 126R are fully expanded, the two rear drive wheels 56L and 56R are thereby moved into a fully extended (rearward) fore-aft position as illustrated in Figure 8B.

Lastly, please also amend paragraph 0065 of the specification as hereinafter indicated.

[0065] Another alternative embodiment 20C of the vehicle 20 is illustrated in Figure 12. As illustrated, the vehicle 20C uniquely includes, first of all, an anti-tip disc 92 serving as a supplemental ground-interacting apparatus for the purpose of safety. In addition, the vehicle 20C also uniquely includes a pair of ground-interacting track assemblies (only the left track assembly 94L ~~and 94R~~ is shown). Such ground-interacting track assemblies ~~94L and 94R~~ are preferably mounted to both the adjustable axle assembly 86 and a forward suspension 140 of the vehicle 20C such that the two rear drive wheels 56L and 56R are respectively engaged within the two ground-interacting track assemblies ~~94L and 94R~~ to thereby facilitate moving interaction with the ground 103. As clearly demonstrated in Figure 12, when the vehicle 20C is traveling over ground 103 that is substantially level, the actively adjustable axle system 131 will generally maintain the adjustable axle assembly 86 along with both the two rear drive wheels 56L and 56R and also the two track assemblies ~~94L and 94R~~ in a fully retracted (forward) fore-aft position. When, on the other hand, the vehicle 20C is traveling over ground 103 that includes uneven terrain 104 necessitating travel up a steep hill, the actively adjustable axle system 131 will then adjust the adjustable axle assembly 86 along with both the two rear drive wheels 56L and 56R and also the two track assemblies ~~94L and 94R~~ toward an extended (rearward) fore-aft position as necessary to thereby safely maintain the overall balance of the vehicle 20C.